# Information Paper

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District

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| **Date:** | 06/10/2002 |
| **Project Name:** | Centralia Flood Damage Reduction Project |
| **Location:** | Cities of Centralia, Chehalis and surrounding communities, Washington |
| **Project Manager:** | Beth Coffey, 206 764-4478 |
| **Sponsor:** | Lewis County, Commissioner Richard Graham |

**Description:** The cities of Centralia and Chehalis have been subject to repeated flooding for many years. This flooding has caused extensive damage to private and public property and periodic closure of critical transportation routes resulting in significant economic losses.

In 1998, the U.S. House of Representative Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to conduct a General Reevaluation of flood reduction in the areas of Chehalis and Centralia. With local sponsorship from Lewis County the Corps initiated Centralia Flood Damage Reduction Project. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is also a partner in this project.

**Status:** The Centralia Flood Damage Reduction Project team (which includes members from the local sponsor team and the Corps), working closely with the local, federal and state agencies, local tribes and the public, developed a list of alternatives for reducing flood damages. Some of the alternatives investigated included Skookumchuck Dam modifications, floodplain modifications, levee systems, flow restrictors, and nonstructural alternatives. The selection of a recommended alternative was based on many different criteria including: Will the alternative reduce flood damage? Does it minimize environmental impacts and provide environmental benefits? Will it adversely impact the downstream communities? Is the alternative cost beneficial? Will public benefits exceed public cost?

The recommended alternative for the Centralia Flood Damage Reduction Project consists of installation of setback levees along the Chehalis and Skookumchuck Rivers, and modifications on Skookumchuck Dam to create flood control storage.

- A series of setback levees would be installed along the Chehalis River and its tributaries: Salzer Creek, Skookumchuck River and Dillenbaugh Creek. The levees will provide 100-year flood protection for roads and structures throughout the cities of Centralia, Chehalis and the surrounding communities, as well as Interstate 5 (I-5). This alternative will cause a slight increase in flood levels in the flood plain between river miles 71 to 74 near the Chehalis-Centralia Airport. As part of the project it will be recommended that eight homes be raised that would experience an increase in flood stage.

- Skookumchuck Dam would be modified to allow for 20,000 acre-feet of flood control storage while continuing to supply Centralia Steam Plant water and low flow

augmentation during the summer. The modification will change the quantity of water the dam can hold from 11,000 acre-feet to 20,000 acre-feet allowing for greater control of the storage and release of the water. The dam modifications will ensure lower flood levels in areas below the confluence of the Chehalis and Skookumchuck Rivers.

- The project will also create, enhance or restore connectivity in the floodplain in the vicinity of Scheuber ditch. Habitat will include reconnection of oxbow, opening under State Route 6 (SR-6), riparian wetland habitat along Scheuber ditch and connection the with Chehalis river.

Currently the project team is developing a General Reevaluation Report (GRR) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to submit to Congress under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2002. WRDA is the bill that authorizes construction for Corps projects. The GRR and EIS will document the evaluation of alternatives and selection of the recommended project plan. A public comment period for these documents is scheduled to begin 22 July 2002 and will last 45 days.

If the Corps receives authorization in WRDA 2002 and funding is approved, construction could start as early as Spring 2004.

**Authority (Authorization):** WRDA 1986, PublicLaw 99-662, Effective Date 11/17/86

**Additional information concerning the project may be obtained at:**
http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/index.cfm or from Army Corps of Engineer, Project Manager, Beth Coffey, USACE, ATTN: PM-PL 4735 E. Marginal Way S Seattle, WA 98134-3755, (206) 764 – 4478, Frances.E.Coffey@usace.army.mil